



The Australian Pain Society

2009  
*Distinguished  
Member  
Awards*

Awarded for services to the promotion,  
treatment and science of pain management  
and lifelong contribution to the  
Australian Pain Society.

After earning a PhD from the University of Wisconsin in 1974, Dr Connie Peck became an Instructor in the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at the University of Washington Medical School where she worked as a psychologist (with Dr Wilbert Fordyce, a pioneer in the behavioural management of chronic pain). It was one of the first interdisciplinary clinics to provide inpatient treatment to chronic pain sufferers. Dr Peck also established a biofeedback clinic and published in the field of EMG biofeedback for pain related to muscle tension.

In 1977, Dr Connie Peck took up an appointment in the Department of Psychology at La Trobe University where she continued to carry out research, teaching and clinical work in the field of chronic and acute pain management, including multi-disciplinary research in post-operative pain at the Southern Memorial Hospital.

At this time, she also began to organise quarterly meetings of pain researchers and clinicians, which led to the idea of creating a Multidisciplinary Pain Society in Australia and New Zealand, to be affiliated with the International Association for the Study of Pain which had been formed in 1974. To help organise the first conference, Dr Peck established a committee of leading pain researchers and practitioners in both countries, including Dr Arthur Duggan, Professor Issy Pilowsky, Dr Robert Boas, Professor I Milton and Dr John Ditton, as well as Professor George Singer and Professor Jack Nayman.



## Connie Peck AO

BA; MA; PhD

The outcome was the First Australia / New Zealand Conference on Pain held in December 1978 at La Trobe University where papers were presented by anaesthetists, surgeons, nurses, neurosurgeons, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, pharmacologists, physiologists and neurologists. With Meredith Wallace, Dr Peck then co-edited a book of the proceedings entitled *Problems in Pain*, published by Pergamon Press.

The time for such an initiative was obviously ripe. In a parallel effort unbeknownst to this group, Professor Michael Cousins was organising for an Australasian Chapter to be ratified at the Second World Congress on Pain in August 1978. Following discussion with Prof Cousins and Dr Peter Wilson prior to the La Trobe conference, it was decided that the first official meeting of the pain society should take place the following year and that the 1978 conference would be considered a lead-up to this event.

In 1982, Dr Peck published *Controlling Chronic Pain* with Fontana / Collins. Prof Patrick Wall persuaded Fontana in the UK to publish its own edition and wrote the foreword, calling it "...a caring, careful book for those in pain." The book was also published in German by Rowohlt Taschenbuch. During the 1980s and early 1990s, Dr Peck continued to supervise masters and doctoral students and to publish articles and book chapters in the fields of acute and chronic pain management; the placebo response; and medical compliance. She also remained active in the Australian Pain Society and served on the organising committee

of the Eighth Annual Scientific Meeting in 1986 which brought Dr Fordyce to Australia as its keynote speaker.

Becoming increasingly interested in conflict prevention and resolution, in the mid-1980s she created 'Psychologists for the Prevention of War' as an Interest Group of the Australian Psychological Society and became its first Convenor. In 1986, she also established the La Trobe University Institute for Peace Research and was appointed its first Chair.

Following a proposal by Dr Peck to the Australian Foreign Minister to examine how peacemaking and preventive diplomacy could be strengthened at the United Nations, she was appointed as a Special Consultant to Senator Gareth Evans and subsequently spent most of 1992 at the Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations in New York. After making a series of recommendations to the Minister and to the UN, including one for advanced training for UN staff and diplomats in negotiation and mediation, she resigned from her position as a Reader at La Trobe University.

She moved to the United Nations Institute for Training and Research in Geneva, Switzerland where she founded the Programme in Peacemaking and Preventive Diplomacy. Over the past 16 years, the programme has provided advanced training to UN staff and diplomats around the world through an annual Fellowship Programme in Peacemaking and Preventive Diplomacy (held in Norway); a Regional Training Programme to Enhance Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Africa (held in Addis Ababa); a Sub-regional Training Programme for Southern Africa (held in Capetown); and an annual seminar for Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and senior Headquarters staff (held in Switzerland).

In 1996, Connie also organised the 50th anniversary

symposium for the International Court of Justice in The Hague. In 2000, she initiated a six-year project on debriefing Special Representatives of the Secretary General to preserve the lessons from their experience for future peace operations. To fund these activities, she obtained multiple grants from the Governments of Australia, Austria, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, and the United Kingdom as well as the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the McKnight Foundation, and the United States Institute of Peace.

Dr Connie Peck has also authored eight books on conflict prevention and resolution, including *The United Nations as a Dispute Settlement System* (published by Kluwer Law International with a foreword by Gareth Evans); *Increasing the Effectiveness of the International Court of Justice* (co-edited with Roy Lee and published by Martinus Nijhof Publishers, with a foreword by Kofi Annan); *Sustainable Peace: The Role of the United Nations and Regional Organizations in Preventing Conflict* (published by Rowman and Littlefield with a foreword by David Hamburg); and two editions of *On Becoming a Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General* (published by UNITAR). As well, she has published numerous articles and book chapters and produced and edited 28 video interviews with Special Representatives of the Secretary-General.

In 1990, Connie was honoured with the Inaugural Award for Outstanding Work in Community Psychology, by the Australian Psychological Society. In 1994, she was appointed an Officer in the Order of Australia for 'distinguished service of a high degree to Australia and to humanity at large' and for her service to 'psychology and conflict resolution, theory and practice'.

